

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
**Office of Archives and History**  
**Department of Cultural Resources**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Downtown Mount Holly Historic District**

Mount Holly, Gaston County, GS0301, Listed 4/24/2012

Nomination by Laura A. W. Phillips

Photographs by Laura A. W. Phillips, January 2011



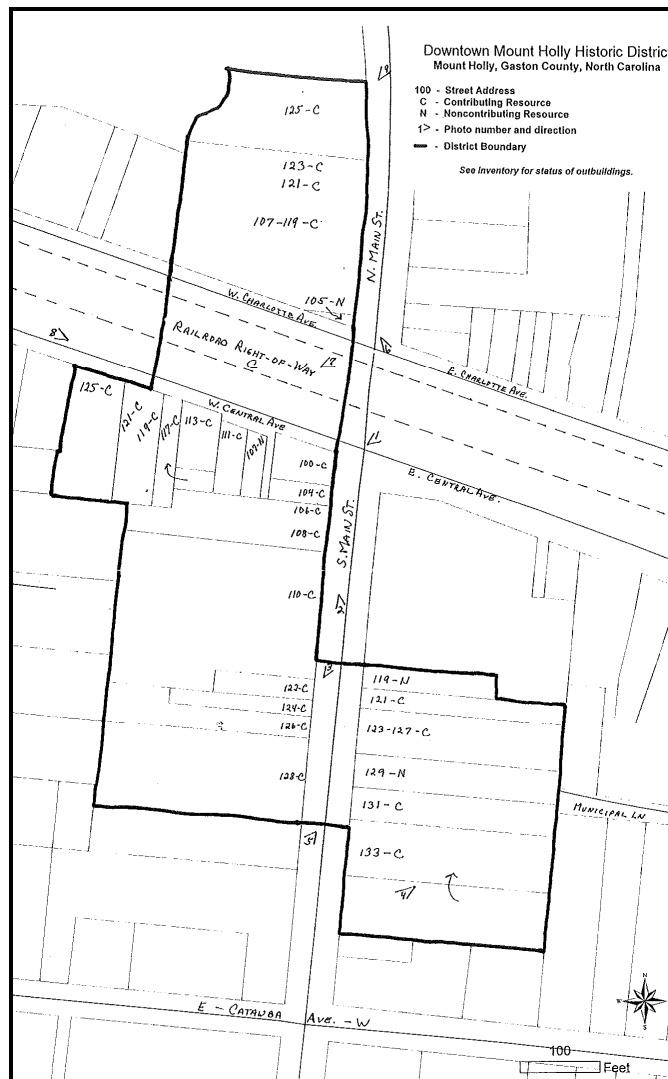
South Main Street, west side



South Main Street, east side



North Main Street, west side



Historic District Map

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of property**

historic name Downtown Mount Holly Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 100 blocks, North and South Main Sts. and West Central Ave. Not for publication N/A

city or town Mount Holly vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Gaston code 071 zip code 28120

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Downtown Mount Holly Historic District  
Name of Property

Gaston County, NC  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private  
☒ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

☐ building(s)  
☒ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>25</u>	<u>5</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>26</u>	<u>6</u>	Total

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE</u>	Sub: <u>specialty store</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>department store</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>business</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>financial institution</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>professional</u>
<u>RELIGION</u>	<u>religious facility</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>city hall</u>
<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>	<u>rail-related</u>

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE</u>	Sub: <u>specialty store</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>business</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>restaurant</u>
<u>RELIGION</u>	<u>religious facility</u>
<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>	<u>rail-related</u>
<u>VACANT/NOT IN USE</u>	

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style  
Modern Movement  
Classical Revival

### Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Not visible  
roof Other: Built-up composition  
walls Brick  
Stucco  
other Brick  
Stone

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or a grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture

### Period of Significance

ca. 1883 -1960

### Significant Dates

N/A

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Young Construction Company - contractor

Rankin, R. F. – contractor

Hand, W. H. and Son – contractor

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS)

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary Location of Additional Data

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Downtown Mount Holly Historic District

Name of Property

Gaston County, NC

County and State

## **10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Approx. 8

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing

1 17 498490 3905820

2         

Zone Easting Northing

3         

4           
   See continuation sheet.

## **Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

## **Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## **11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Laura A. W. Phillips, Architectural Historian

organization Consultant to Mount Holly Community Development Foundation date December 15, 2011

street & number 637 North Spring Street telephone (336) 727-1968

city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27101

## **12. Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### **Continuation Sheets**

### **Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### **Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## **Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Bryan Hough, Mayor, City of Mount Holly

street & number P. O. Box 406 telephone 704-827-3931

city or town Mount Holly state NC zip code 28120

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

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Gaston County, North Carolina

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Architectural Classification, cont'd.

Gothic Revival

#### Materials, cont'd.

Roof: Asphalt  
Slate

Other: Concrete  
Wood  
Metal

### Narrative

Located at the crossing of the CSX Railroad – originally the Wilmington, Charlotte, and Rutherford Railroad – and Main Street, the Downtown Mount Holly Historic District is the historic commercial center of this Gaston County, North Carolina town. Like many towns in this region of the state, Mount Holly's historic commercial growth was tied to the many textile mills established there beginning in 1874 and to the railroad. The district contains thirty-two resources – thirty buildings and two structures – of which twenty-eight are primary. All but three of the primary resources are commercial buildings; the others include two churches and the railroad right-of-way.

The district encompasses parts of three blocks with buildings arranged along both sides of the 100 block of South Main Street, the west side of the 100 block of North Main Street, and the south side of the 100 block of West Central Avenue. The railroad right-of-way forms the link between the north and south sections of Main Street. Typical of historic small-town commercial centers, the streetscapes present rows of one- and two-story brick buildings, the majority of which abut the sidewalk and are contiguous. By contrast, the two churches are set back from the street with large front lawns.

In addition to its streets and buildings, the district has other man-made and natural features. Granite curbs line South Main Street, but the curbs on North Main Street and West Central Avenue are concrete. Except for the concrete sidewalk in front of 125 North Main Street, the other sidewalks are herringbone-patterned brick, a product of downtown revitalization efforts in 2005-2006. At the same time, tall, reeded and crowned street lamps were installed and



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street trees – some of them hollies – and flowers were planted along the sidewalks. Several narrow alleys run between buildings. There are no separate parking lots or vacant lots. Lot sizes in the district vary, but all are considerably deeper than they are wide.

Following a natural, if not steady, progression, the Downtown Mount Holly Historic District reflects the pattern of building from ca. 1883 to 1960. Documentary accounts and photographs make clear that the earliest commercial buildings in Mount Holly were frame, but none of these remain in the district. Two of the first brick commercial buildings, located at 107-119 North Main Street and 106 South Main Street, date from the 1880s and are the only nineteenth-century buildings that remain. Based on surviving buildings, commercial growth in the district remained relatively slow for several decades. Only four buildings date from the first decade of the twentieth century, and none are known to have been built in the second decade. According to the 1922 Sanborn map, frame buildings were still present in the district at that time. This soon changed, for the 1920s proved to be the strongest period of growth in Mount Holly's commercial center. The 1929 Sanborn map shows a great increase in the number of brick commercial buildings lining Main Street, Central Avenue, and Charlotte Avenue (which parallels the railroad on its north side). Forty-eight percent of the district's primary resources were erected during that decade. With the arrival of the Great Depression at the end of the 1920s, construction came largely to a halt. Only two district buildings – located at 123 North Main Street and 124 South Main Street – date from the 1930s. The lag in construction continued through World War II, when construction materials were scarce, but in the post-war 1940s through the 1950s, six more primary buildings (and a secondary resource, the Education Building-Fellowship Hall at First Presbyterian Church) were added. In 1960, Charlie's Drugs and Sundries at 125 West Central Avenue became the last building constructed in the district.

The scale, materials, level of decoration, and design of the primary resources help to define the district's overall character. The number of one-story commercial buildings more than doubles those with two stories. Most of the commercial buildings have a single storefront and are generally three bays wide. However, both 125 North Main Street and 128 South Main Street, dating from the 1940s and 1950s, have exceptionally long single storefronts. Two of the largest buildings – both two stories in height – are 123-127 South Main Street, which has three storefronts and five bays across the second story, and 107-119 North Main Street, which has four storefronts and seventeen bays across the second story. While all primary buildings in the district are brick, eleven have painted facades and one has a stuccoed facade and side elevation.

Architecturally, most of the commercial buildings in the district are typical of those built in small towns across North Carolina from the late nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. All have storefronts, generally with a recessed central entrance and flanking windows. Most have very simple, standard decoration, often consisting of little more than a slightly recessed brick panel on the upper façade. Both two-story buildings from the 1880s have



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segmental-arched windows on the second story (covered with modern cornices at 107-119 North Main Street), and 106 South Main Street has a typical corbelled brick cornice. Some of the 1920s buildings, including those located at 131 South Main Street and 107 and 111 West Central Avenue, achieve decoration through patterning in the brickwork with cast-stone accents, a reflection of the Commercial Style. As the twentieth century progressed, commercial buildings began to take on a modernist appearance, with a horizontal emphasis and an increased use of glass, best illustrated by Kimbrell's Store at 125 North Main Street.

Although it is only a one-story structure, the most stylish of the district's commercial buildings is the Mount Holly Bank at 100 South Main Street, which reflects the influence of the Classical Revival style. The other buildings that exhibit the strongest sense of style are not commercial buildings but the two substantial church buildings. The 1903 Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd at 110 South Main Street exemplifies the Gothic Revival-style, while the 1927 First Presbyterian Church at 133 South Main Street is a stately example of the Classical Revival style.

The historic buildings and structures that comprise the Downtown Mount Holly Historic District form a cohesive unit that is distinguished from the surrounding built environment. North of the district is a residential area. The 1922 and 1929 Sanborn maps show that other commercial buildings had been erected east of the district along the east side of the 100 block of North Main Street, the 100 block of East Charlotte Avenue, and at the southeast corner of East Central Avenue and South Main Street. However, some of these buildings, and others that were added between 1930 and 1960, were substantially remodeled after 1960, and the large First State Bank and Trust Building that stood at the southeast corner of South Main Street and East Central Avenue was demolished in the 1980s to make way for a new bank, now Wells Fargo. The large, sprawling bank building is out of character with the older, smaller-scale commercial buildings in the district, and its construction brought the demolition of several historic commercial buildings along the east side of South Main Street. South of the district are modern commercial buildings and houses, and west of the district are vacant lots, modern commercial buildings, and houses.

The Downtown Mount Holly Historic District possesses integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association from its period of significance, ca. 1883 to 1960. Despite some post-1960 alterations, aerial photographs show that, in large part, the district retains its appearance from the mid-twentieth century. Buildings are in good to excellent condition, and none have been moved. Typical alterations, which have affected approximately half of the commercial buildings, include modifications to storefronts, in which the doors and large shop windows have been replaced with like elements in modern materials. In only four cases have alterations adversely affected the contributing status of the buildings. Of the district's thirty-two primary and secondary resources, eighty-one percent contribute to the historic and

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architectural character of the district. The non-contributing resources include four remodeled buildings, a shed, and a carport.

### Inventory List

The following inventory list provides basic information for all properties in the Downtown Mount Holly Historic District. Included are each property's name, current address, date or approximate date of construction and major alterations (when known), contributing or noncontributing status, and a summary of each property's physical character and history.

**Note:** Unless otherwise stated, all roofs are of built-up composition and slope slightly from the front to the rear with a standard commercial parapet across the front and often down the sides. Building foundations are not visible.

Survey files containing photo proofs, survey data entry forms, maps, and other physical or historical information on the district's properties are maintained in Raleigh by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Buildings, sites, structures, or objects that add to the historic associations or historic architectural qualities for which the district is significant, were present during the district's period of significance (ca. 1883-1960), relate to the documented significance of the district, and possess historic integrity, or that independently meet the National Register criteria are *contributing resources*. Buildings, sites, structures, or objects that do not add to the district's historic associations or historic architectural qualities for which the district is significant, were not present during the period of significance, do not relate to the documented significance of the district, or due to alterations, additions, or other changes no longer possess historic integrity, or that do not independently meet the National Register criteria are *noncontributing resources*. Lack of historic integrity occurs when alterations, additions, or the loss of original details hinder a building from conveying a strong sense of its appearance during the period when it achieved its significance.

In the following inventory, the railroad right-of-way is listed first. Following it, the remainder of the district's resources are arranged by street, with the streets listed alphabetically. Within each street, property addresses are listed in ascending order.

Property addresses and the contributing or noncontributing status of the district's primary resources are keyed to the accompanying district map. The four secondary resources (e.g. outbuildings) are listed only within the inventory list.

Inventory entries are based on on-site recording and research conducted by Laura A. W. Phillips during the fall of 2010 and the winter of 2011. Numerous sources were used and are listed, in abbreviated form, in parentheses at the end of each inventory entry. Sanborn maps for

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1922 and 1929 and tax records were used so frequently that they are listed simply as SM and TR. Full citations are provided in the bibliography.

### RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY

Contributing structure

West of Main Street between West Charlotte and West Central avenues  
1860 (rail line)

The Wilmington, Charlotte, and Rutherford Railroad was incorporated in 1855 and construction began in the late 1850s. In 1860, the line reached the Woodlawn community – later known as Mount Holly – and it arrived in Lincolnton the following year. In 1873, the railroad was reorganized as the Carolina Central Railroad. In 1892, that railroad became part of the Seaboard Air Line Railway. Following several additional mergers, the railroad became part of CSX Transportation, Inc. in 1986. The railroad was a major factor in the development of Mount Holly, largely because it provided the necessary transportation for the goods produced in the area's textile mills. This, in turn, spurred the community's commercial growth. Typically, the town developed around the railroad.

A short stretch of the single track with its right-of-way is included in the historic district. The right-of-way is approximately seventy feet wide and is set between the double lanes of Charlotte Avenue on the north and Central Avenue on the south. The metal track is attached to wood crossties, and the whole is set on a bed of gravel. A metal fence that serves as a protective guard runs along both sides of the track through the commercial section of town. Within the district, the railroad is the link between North Main Street and South Main Street and West Central Avenue. (Beatty et al.; North Carolina Railroads)

### WEST CENTRAL AVENUE (100 block)

#### Commercial Building

Noncontributing building

107 West Central Avenue  
Ca. 1925; third quarter twentieth century

Despite the fact that this two-story, brick, Commercial Style building is nearly identical to the contiguous 111 West Central Avenue, there are just enough differences – foremost among them the difference in the color of the bricks – to suggest that the two were built separately. One was probably built soon after the other in a second phase of construction, and this building may have

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been first. Sanborn Maps make clear that both 107 and 111 were constructed between 1922 and 1929.

A variety of businesses have occupied the building. In 1929, the east half was a store and the west half was an office. In the 1930s, W. L. Rawlings' plumbing business occupied the building. The Rhyne Shoe Shop was a tenant for some years during the mid-twentieth century.

The original brickwork, laid in seven-to-one common bond, is brown in color. The building has a two-bay façade, determined largely by the two windows on the second floor, which are modern four-part replacements of the original paired one-over-one sash. The windows retain their brick soldier-course surrounds with cast-stone corner blocks. Soldier-brick string courses at the tops and bottoms of the windows extend across the facade. A metal vent is above each window. The top of the building has a cast-stone coping. The corners of the façade are accentuated by slightly projecting, plain brick pilasters. Light salmon-brown brick veneer covers the first story of the façade and wraps half way down the first story of the east elevation, which faces an alley. This change appears to date from the third quarter of the twentieth century. The facade no longer has a storefront. Instead, an off-center glass and aluminum door and an adjacent single-light window have been punched into the brick-veneer wall. A flat metal canopy stretches across the first story between where corner pilasters originally stood.

The second story of the east elevation continues the same window pattern as on the façade. The northernmost two windows have the same replacement glass as on the façade, but the southernmost two windows have been bricked up. The north end of the first story of the east elevation has a single, one-light window that matches the modern window on the façade. Interestingly, a ca. 1930 photograph of the building shows a similar window at that location, although the present window may be somewhat smaller than the earlier opening. The southern half of the east elevation has two triple-rowlock, segmental-arched, bricked-up openings. The north opening is tall and has a shallower arched head; the south opening is shorter, broader, and has a more rounded arched head. Both arches are composed of three rows of bricks.

The rear of the building has a plain, one-story, brick addition with a flat roof. It appears to date from the third quarter of the twentieth century. Above it, the second story has two bricked-up windows and one replacement window. (SM, TR, 1930s promotional brochure)

**Commercial Building**  
111 West Central Avenue  
Ca. 1925

Contributing building

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Despite the fact that this two-story brick building is nearly identical to the contiguous 107 West Central Avenue, there are just enough differences – foremost among them the difference in the color of the bricks – to suggest that the two were built separately. One was probably built soon after the other in a second phase of construction, and this building may have been the second of the two. Sanborn Maps make clear that both 107 and 111 were constructed between 1922 and 1929. Some local residents know this as the Broome Building and say that at one time it housed the Mount Holly Funeral Home.

The building appears to have been sensitively rehabilitated in recent years. This has included new windows, which are one-over-one sash like the originals, and some replacement shop front materials, which probably are either like or very similar to the original form and materials.

The two-story building has load-bearing, red-brick walls of five-to-one common bond. The Commercial Style façade is divided into two overall bays of unequal width. Plain brick pilasters divide the two sections and mark the corners of the building. The west pilaster of the contiguous building at 107 West Central Avenue doubles, visually, as the east pilaster of this building. On the second story, the wider east bay has a double window and a single window; the narrower west bay has a double window. Like the windows at 107, these have a soldier-course surround with cast-stone corner blocks and soldier-brick string courses at the tops and bottoms that extend across the facade. The top of the building has a cast-stone coping. The two storefronts have metal-framed plate-glass windows with transoms and a brick dado and recessed entrances with wood-framed glass doors. A door at the east end of the façade opens to the stair to the second floor. A modern cloth canopy of old design but modern materials shelters each storefront.

The west elevation fronts an alley. It has a windowless first story and a row of eight single windows, like those on the façade, on the second story. On the rear, the second story has three asymmetrically positioned windows like those on the façade and west elevation but without the corner blocks. On the first story, each bay has a segmental-arched door with an adjacent segmental-arched window. However, the windows are largely hidden by the addition of boxed metal structures of unknown purpose that cover them. A small, partially paved parking area is behind the building. (SM, TR)

**Dr. Raymond Moore Dental Office**  
113 West Central Avenue  
Ca. 1948

Contributing building

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Initially, this building housed the office of dentist Dr. Raymond Moore. The nearly square, one-story brick building hints of modernism in its low hipped roof, widely overhanging eaves, asymmetrical façade with slightly projecting left half, and flat-roofed canopy that shelters the entrance and front steps. The sides and rear of the building are red brick veneer, while the façade is sheathed with yellow face brick. The windows are one-over-one sash with brick sills, paired on the three-bay façade but single on the sides and rear. The front entrance abuts the east façade windows. Another entrance is located toward the rear of the east side. Tall, architectural brick planters form cheek walls flanking the front steps. The east-side planter turns and extends eastward along the façade from the entrance to the east corner. The free-standing building is set approximately six feet back from the sidewalk and the facades of the buildings on either side of it. The space between the building and the sidewalk holds a small garden area with a variety of plantings, two small crepe myrtles, and a park bench. (TR, Rhyne typescript, Nixon interview)

**Commercial Building**  
117 W. Central Avenue  
Ca. 1950

Contributing building

The narrow, one-story, red brick-veneer building is free-standing. Erected ca. 1950, it is a slightly modernized version of one-story commercial buildings typical of the 1920s and 1930s. It features a three-bay, symmetrical façade with a central glass door flanked by square, plate-glass windows with brick sills and soldier-course lintels. A canvas awning shelters the entrance. The upper façade has a shallow, brick-bordered panel, and there is a terra cotta cornice coping

A pair of small plate-glass windows is near the front of the east side. A single, six-over-six sash window is the only one on the west side. A brick flue rises approximately halfway down the west side of the building. The side parapets of the building have a terra-cotta tile coping. The rear of the building has one door and one window.

The original occupant could not be determined. The Community Relief Organization of Mount Holly currently occupies the building.

An alley separates the building from the adjacent building at 119 W. Central Avenue. (TR)

**Storage Building**  
Ca. 1950

Contributing building

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National Park Service

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Southeast of the building and directly behind 113 West Central Avenue, but on a separate lot, is a one-story frame storage building. An aerial view of Mount Holly from the 1950s shows that the building was on site by that time. It has a brick-pier foundation, corrugated metal sheathing, and a broad front-gable roof. The few windows – one per side – are small, one-over-one sash. A door at the west end opens to a small wood deck with a simple wood railing. At the north end of the deck, a wood ramp leads down to the rear door of the commercial building.

### **Mount Holly News Building**

Contributing building

119 West Central Avenue  
Ca. 1926, ca. 1950

The *Mount Holly News* was established ca. 1926, and the 1929 Sanborn map identifies this building as a printing office. In addition to the weekly *Mount Holly News*, the *Belmont Banner* and the *Mecklenburg Times* – also weekly papers – were printed here. The three were owned by B. Arp Lowrance. In August 1946, lightning struck the building and gutted the interior, although the exterior appears to have remained largely intact. The building continued as the newspaper office until ca. 1970, when it moved to a location on the north side of the railroad tracks. Around 1990, the *Mount Holly News* and the *Belmont Banner* merged and moved to Belmont. The Mount Holly paper ceased publication in 2009.

Except for the replacement of the original double-leaf front door, the façade of the one-story brick building appears to be little altered. Two plate-glass windows flank the central entrance, and a three-part fixed transom runs across the façade door and windows. A shallow, brick-bordered panel that originally held the name *Mount Holly News* runs nearly across the building above the entrance and windows. The east end of the façade has a stepped parapet roofline and the west end was probably also stepped originally. Now, however, the cornice continues in a straight line westward, joining with the cornice of the adjacent building. Much of the brick cornice coping has been covered with sheet metal. The façade has been painted a cream color. A canvas canopy shelters the storefront. The sides and rear of the building are red brick. The east side of the building, laid in one-to-six common bond, has a parapet that steps downward toward the rear, and four segmental-arched windows, now covered with plywood. A brick addition, probably constructed in the mid-twentieth century after the fire, extends the building to the rear. The parapeted rear of the building has one door. The east side of the addition has a single door and two bricked-up windows. (SM; *Mount Holly News*, August 23, 1946; Lark Interview; Frady Interview; Nixon Interview)



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### Grier's Cleaners

Contributing building

121 West Central Avenue

Ca. 1929

The 1929 Sanborn map indicates that “cleaning and pressing” took place at this site. Older residents say it was Grier's Cleaners. The one-story brick building has a three-bay façade with a recessed central entrance composed of a glass-and-wood-paneled, double-leaf door. Flanking shop windows rest on a brick dado. The transom over the storefront has been enclosed. A canvas awning shelters the storefront. A shallow, brick-bordered panel stretches across most of the upper façade. The roofline parapet on the west end of the façade is stepped. The façade is painted a cream color, but the west side and rear are unpainted red brick laid in six-to-one common bond. A brick coping forms the upper edge of the façade parapet and the stepped parapet on the west side. A loading door at the middle of the west side of the building and a window at the rear of the building have been enclosed with wood. The remainder of the rear is hidden by a tall wood privacy fence that surrounds a patio. A paved parking strip runs along the west side of the building. (SM, Rhyne typescript)

### Charlie's Drugs and Sundries

Contributing building

125 West Central Avenue

1960

Charlie's Drugs and Sundries was incorporated on August 28, 1947 with three stockholders, one of whom was Charlie Taylor. He had been a pharmacist at Holland Drug Company, when he decided to start his own business. The first location of Charlie's Drugs was at 118 East Central Avenue. The second location was at 100 South Main Street. In April 1960, with a newly constructed building, Charlie's moved to 125 West Central Avenue, where it has remained for more than fifty years.

The one-story building has red five-to-one bond brick on the sides and rear and yellow stacked bond Roman brick on the three-bay façade. The façade is nearly consumed by glass – a central glass door and flanking plate-glass windows. A canvas canopy covers the upper façade and shelters the storefront. The west elevation has no openings. Near the rear of the east elevation are two doors – one glass pedestrian door and one larger wood loading door. The two are sheltered by a flat, corrugated-metal canopy supported by metal braces at each end. A single wood door is that the center of the rear elevation. A narrow paved driveway runs along the east side of this free-standing building and opens into a paved parking area behind the building. (History of Charlie's Drugs and Sundries)

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### NORTH MAIN STREET (100 block)

#### Commercial Building

Noncontributing building

105 North Main Street

Ca. 1900; last quarter twentieth century

This heavily-altered two-story brick building is all that remains of the Rhyne Building, or Rhyne Hall, that once dominated this corner. Built ca. 1900, the building had a primary entrance on the southeast corner and shop fronts along North Main Street, all crowned by a bracketed cornice. Windows and doors along West Central Avenue and second-story windows all had segment-arched lintels. The Town of Mount Holly held its meetings on the second floor until moving to South Main Street. The second floor, which had a stage, was also used for traveling shows, political meetings, wrestling matches, graduations and other ceremonies, and the meeting of various fraternal orders, including the Masons, Odd Fellows, Woodmen, Junior Order, and the Redmen. Other early uses of the building included A. P. Rhyne's office and a general store. Later, a drug store, service station, and taxi lot were on the premises. When West Charlotte Avenue was widened in the 1930s, the building lost approximately half its width and some of its height.

Today the once-large building is a short, two-story structure. The modern façade is veneered with Flemish-bond brickwork and gives the appearance of being only one story. The two-bay storefront is recessed at an angle from the rest of the façade, with a Colonial Revival entrance in the south bay and a multi-pane bowed window in the north bay. The south side and rear of the building are stuccoed. The age of the building can be seen on the rear, where segmental-arched windows of two stories and a basement survive. (Documentary photos; *Mount Holly News*, February 11, 1955 and July 27, 1978; Rhyne typescript)

#### Commercial Building

Contributing building

107-119 North Main Street

Ca. 1883

This two-story brick building is the largest and oldest commercial building in Mount Holly's historic downtown. It has been known at times as the Farrar Building or simply as the brick block. An 1895 photograph shows a row of shop fronts and a flat canopy with support posts and a balustraded roof deck across the center nine bays. A central, round-arched door opened to the

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second-story deck, and above it, the building's parapeted cornice rose in a round arch. A hotel occupied the second floor. Number 107 once housed Farrar's General Store, and a funeral home was on the second floor. Number 113 was Moore Brothers' Grocery Store, 115 was the Meville 5 & 10 Store, and 117 was the A & P Grocery.

The building is an astonishing seventeen bays wide. The center bay opens to the stair to the second floor. During the third quarter of the twentieth century, the façade was sheathed with metal, but this was removed in a recent remodeling. Although the storefronts have been modernized with new doors and windows, the rhythm of the long row of two-over-two sash windows on the second story remains. Originally these had brick segmental-arched lintels; these may remain, but they are now hidden by a modern classical cornice above each window. The red bricks of the façade have been painted a creamy yellow. The original paneled cornice with round-arched center bay has been replaced by a simple classical cornice. The rear of the building has been stuccoed, but here the segmental-arched window lintels remain visible. The rear has a variety of doors, and a wood-shingled shed extends along the northern eight bays. The exposed second story of the north end of the building is stuccoed. (*Mount Holly News*, January 5, 1978; Rhyne typescript; *Belmont Banner-Mount Holly News*, July 11-12, 1979)

(Note: the tax records refer to the building as 115 North Main Street, but on the ground, the storefronts are numbered 107, 111, 113, 115, 117, and 119.)

**Commercial Building**  
121 North Main Street  
Ca. 1920

Contributing building

The 1922 Sanborn map shows that this one-story brick building had been constructed by that time. Typical of small commercial buildings of the period, it is a narrow but long building. Probably in the 1970s, the building, along with the adjacent building at 123, was completely remodeled with a largely enclosed façade and a sloped, wood-shake "roof" that covered the upper half of the facade. In 2010, those changes were removed and the building was returned to something akin to its original appearance. The upper façade, with its brick-bordered name panel set within a broad, recessed brick plane, is likely original, although the classical cornice is added. The storefront, with its center door flanked by large shop windows – the whole topped by multi-pane transoms, is likely similar to its original appearance. The façade is painted. The rear of the building is stuccoed and has a raised door reached by a set of iron steps. The building was the home of Jack and Ward Rhyne's Grocery and, later, the office of Dr. R. L. Duke. (SM, Rhyne typescript)

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### **Commercial Building**

Contributing building

123 North Main Street  
Ca. 1935

Like the adjacent building at 121, this one-story brick building was completely remodeled, probably in the 1970s, with a largely enclosed façade and a sloped, wood-shake “roof” that covered the upper half of the facade. In 2010, those changes were removed and the building was returned to something that resembled its original appearance. Now painted, the three-bay façade has a center door and flanking shop windows, all headed by multi-light transoms. The upper façade has a recessed plane, in the center of which is a slightly recessed name panel. The classical cornice is added. Plain, paneled pilasters rise at either end of the façade. The exposed north elevation and the rear are stuccoed. The north side has a stepped parapet and two flue stacks that are flush to the wall. Two windows on the rear have been enclosed, and metal steps lead to a raised door. Beneath that door is a door to the basement or crawl space. Sanborn maps show that this building had not been erected by 1929, but it likely dates from the 1930s. (SM)

### **Kimbrell’s Store**

Contributing building

125 North Main Street  
1956

Built in 1956 by Young Construction Company of Charlotte, Kimbrell’s is a classic, mid-twentieth-century, modernist commercial building with a streamlined horizontality. Except for the removal of the Kimbrell’s sign, the historic building remains unaltered from its original construction. The one-story structure is brick veneered on the two sides and rear. The façade is composed of an off-center aluminum-framed glass door and a band of plate-glass windows in aluminum frames set on a brick base. A flat metal canopy with a red-painted metal edge runs the length of the façade and is supported by red-painted metal poles. A row of green metal panels above the canopy completes the façade. The two sides of the building are windowless and have parapets that rise above the façade. At the rear of the free-standing building, a ramp leads to a covered loading dock and a double door at the north end. (*Mount Holly News*, June 1, 1956; Fomberg E-mail, August 11, 2010; Building plans)

### **SOUTH MAIN STREET (100 block)**

#### **Mount Holly Bank**

Contributing building

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100 South Main Street  
Ca. 1920

The Mount Holly Bank was organized in 1903 by Henry Rhyne and Jim Costner. Rhyne was president and Costner was cashier. The original location of the bank is not known, but a new building was constructed in 1920, and the bank occupied it in January 1921. In the late 1940s, Charlie's Drugs occupied the building. Later, the building became a ladies' clothing store, an antiques shop and, finally, a dry cleaners. Doctors and dentists initially occupied offices on the West Central Avenue side of the building.

The Classical Revival Style brick building is only one story, yet it commands a strong presence at this pivotal location at the southwest corner of South Main Street and West Central Avenue. Red brick pilasters with white-painted wood Doric caps and connecting frieze separate the three bays of the Main Street façade and the five bays of the Central Avenue façade. A band of red brickwork separates the frieze from the white classical cornice (now sheathed in aluminum or vinyl) above it. Above the cornice, the brick parapet features a continuation – in plain brick – of the classical pilasters. A concrete coping crowns the parapet. The focal point of the Main Street façade is the central entrance with its classical cornice supported by classical brackets. A shaped parapet rises above the cornice. The door, itself, is a modern glass and aluminum replacement. Flanking the center entrance are plate-glass windows with enclosed transoms and canvas awnings. A triple band of rowlock bricks heads the entrance and the windows.

The Central Avenue façade continues the pattern of the Main Street façade. At the west end is a plate-glass window with an enclosed transom and a canvas awning. It replaced (date unknown) the original three-over-three sash window seen in a 1930s photograph. Except for the west-end (fifth) bay of the Central Avenue façade, the other windows along this side of the building are large three-over-three sash. Brick panels are created beneath the windows by multiple rows of stretcher bricks bordered on top and bottom by rows of soldier bricks. Concrete steps lead to raised entrances on the third, fourth, and fifth bays. The third and fourth bays each have a window and an adjacent double-leaf glass-and-wood paneled door sheltered by a hanging three-light glass-and-wood canopy with a three-light window above. The fifth bay has a glass door in a wood frame with a large, plate-glass window adjacent to it on the east. Its canopy has four lights with a four-light window above it. The 1929 Sanborn map indicates that the fifth bay was the only one at that time with a canopy and that the canopy had wire glass. The rear of the building faces an alley. It has common-bond brickwork and asymmetrically placed, segmental-arched doors and windows, most of which have been bricked-in. (SM; Rhyne typescript; *Mount Holly News*, February 11, 1955; 1930s promotional brochure)

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### **Commercial Building**

Contributing building

104 South Main Street  
Ca. 1910

Built around 1910, if not earlier, this was originally the store of the Holland Drug Company. Later occupants included the Summey Drug Company in the 1930s and the United Variety (5 & 10 cent) Store.

The one-story, painted-brick building is three bays wide. The original storefront of shop windows, transom, and recessed entrance has been replaced with modern aluminum-framed windows and a central, non-recessed door, although the surrounding brickwork remains the same. Now, as then, a canvas awning shelters the storefront, but the transom has been covered with wood. The upper façade is largely intact, with a classical metal cornice above the storefront, a recessed name panel, and a stepped parapet with a granite coping. The parapet remains intact, except for the center, multi-stepped section, which photos show was missing by the 1930s. The rear has brick-up segmental-arched windows and a segmental-arched loading door with a replacement modern door. (Rhyne typescript, 1930s promotional brochure, documentary photos)

### **C. L. Hutchinson and Son Store/Hutchinson-Davenport Store**

Contributing building

106 South Main Street  
Ca. 1886; ca. 1960s

According to Branson's *North Carolina Business Directory* for 1890, there were only two mercantile establishments in town at that time. The general store of C. L. Hutchinson and Son was one of them. Probably after 1891, when son Charles Egbert Hutchison left the mercantile business to become a cotton manufacturer, the business became the Hutchinson-Davenport Store. Probably by the 1920s, along with 108 South Main, it had become the Leader Department Store, and by the mid-twentieth century, it had become the Quality Store. In more recent years, the building has housed a variety of businesses; one of its current tenants is the Mount Holly Community Development Foundation.

The two-story, painted-brick building has a three-bay façade with a replacement storefront. The storefront features plate-glass windows flanking a central recessed entrance, with windows and door set in aluminum frames. Stone panels are at either end. A canvas canopy shelters the storefront. The second story of the façade retains most of its original details, except that by the

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1930s, the balcony shown in early photographs had been removed and the door had been replaced by a window, giving the building its present appearance. The three bays are divided by plain brick pilasters. Within each bay is a one-over-one sash window set within a segmental arch. The windows appear to have six-over-six applied muntins. Above the windows is a projecting band of bricks, name panels, and a corbelled cornice.

Documentary photographs show the appearance of the building's façade at different times. Perhaps the earliest photo, ca. 1911, shows the building with a wide, first-story canopy that stretched across the sidewalk to the street. A ca. 1920 photograph shows no canopy, but a shallow metal balcony across the second story of the façade with a door to the balcony in the south bay and a metal stair to the street. The same photograph shows that the storefront was flush with the façade.

The sides of the building have stepped parapets and no visible windows. The rear retains overhanging eaves with curvilinear wood brackets. Sanborn maps show that in the 1920s the rear had a one-story porch. Attached to the rear today is a plain, one-story, brick addition with a flat roof and windowless walls. On the back wall is a raised door reached by metal stairs. (SM; 1930s promotional brochure; *Mount Holly News*, February 16, 1978; documentary photographs; Ragan, 272)

**Commercial Building**  
108 South Main Street  
Ca. 1910

Contributing building

Local historian Bobby John Rhyne believes that this one-story, painted-brick building was initially the Cathey and Campbell Grocery Store. It was erected after the adjacent commercial building at 106, but by the 1920s, the two had an interior connection and were functioning as a single department store, The Leader. As it was initially, the building is extremely plain. It has a modernized, three-bay storefront with large, aluminum-framed plate-glass windows flanking a deeply recessed aluminum-framed glass entrance. The plain upper façade has a slightly projecting brick cornice band. The exposed south side of the building has a stepped parapet and three tiny replacement windows. At the front of the south side, the painted brickwork reveals that once there was a larger window at this location. Unlike the façade and south side, the rear retains its unpainted brick. It features a large central window and flanking smaller windows, all three with segmental-arched brick lintels. (1930s promotional brochure, Rhyne typescript)

**Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd**

Contributing building



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110 South Main Street  
1903, ca. 1920, 1951, 1980s

The congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd dates from 1881. Prior to the 1880s in Mount Holly, there was no house of worship in the community. When a circuit-riding preacher was in town, interdenominational services were held in a store building. In 1881, Mount Holly residents decided it was time to build a church. People from all denominations contributed to the endeavor, but it was decided that the building would be dedicated, deeded, and controlled by whichever denomination contributed the most money toward its construction. With contributions totaling \$460, the Lutherans gave the largest amount of money, so the new frame building became the Lutheran church, although union services continued to be held in it until the other denominations built their own churches. Local industrialist A. P. Rhyne, who was a Lutheran, gave the land for the church, which remains the site of the present building. The first church constitution was ratified on October 9, 1881, with twenty-two charter members. It was initially called the Mount Holly Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The first frame church was used for more than two decades. However, by 1898, the congregation had begun to plan for a new building. G. D. Jenkins was appointed "to complete the design and make any necessary changes," suggesting that the Lutherans may have used a stock, perhaps denominational, plan for their building, which was then modified to suit their circumstances. Before construction on the new building began, the old frame church was removed. The new brick church with a basement for the Sunday School was completed in 1903 but was not consecrated until September 9, 1907. At the consecration service, the church name was changed to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.

Perhaps fittingly, the first funeral service held at the church, in 1888, was that of Rhyne family patriarch Moses H. Rhyne. With Frederick Hoffman, he had operated the Woodlawn Store, the first in the community. His sons, Abel Peterson and Daniel Efird Rhyne, became two of the most prominent industrialists in both Gaston and Lincoln counties. A. P. Rhyne, one of the founders church, was elected the first secretary in 1882. Members of other prominent local industrialist families, such as Lineberger, Lentz, Cannon, and Costner, also held leadership roles as secretaries, elders, deacons, and advisors in the church. Members such as T. A. Belk and James L. Davenport were not only leaders in the church, but also held roles in city government. Both Belk and Davenport served on the city council. Belk also held the elected position of judge of the Recorder's Court in Mount Holly for twenty-eight years. At one time, Davenport was

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mayor. Through the years, prominent members of the community continued to serve as leaders of the church.

The church began a remodeling in 1916. A chancel, organ loft with new pipe organ, a robing room, two Sunday School rooms in the basement and three art memorial windows were all added, with R. F. Rankin as contractor. The organ loft was completed in 1920, and the pump organ was replaced with a pipe organ and installed in 1921.

In 1949, groundbreaking ceremonies were held for an Education Building that would contain two auditoriums, thirteen classrooms, a ladies parlor, a new choir robing room, and a kitchen. The contractor was W. H. Hand and Son, and the building was completed in 1951. The new building pointed out the need for improvements to the sanctuary, and so work continued. By 1952, the sanctuary had a new altar, pulpit, lectern, baptismal font, pews, lighting fixtures, carpet, and other improvements. The Education Building and the improvements to the sanctuary were dedicated in 1957.

The metal fence around the church yard was added in 1966, and in 1972, a memorial garden was created just south of the church. In 1976, the church purchased the adjacent lot to the south and demolished the old Chevrolet dealership located on it. Then the lawn and the fence were extended to the new property line.

In 1981, Stewart and Cooper Architects, with assistance from the church's Building and Planning Committee, developed plans for a major addition to the south side of the church. This resulted in the construction of the Fellowship and Office Building, which was dedicated in 1988. The last change, a small one, came in 2005, when the old black metal sign on the front lawn was replaced by a new brick sign surrounded by landscaping.

Set back from the sidewalk by a metal picket fence and a front lawn with several trees and other plantings, the exterior of the 1903 Gothic Revival Style church looks as it did when built. Facing east, it is a square, red-brick building with cast stone accents and a three-bay facade. The slate pyramidal roof is topped by a round finial, and at a slightly lower level, a small, one-bay-wide hipped roof for the chancel extends westward from the rear of the primary roof. Parapeted gables rise from the front and two sides of the pyramidal roof, and a chimney rises from the north parapet. Stepped buttresses support the corners of the building and flank the gabled walls, and lancet-arched, stained-glass windows with brick hood molds are positioned in the flat wall spaces between the buttresses. A stone string course encircles the building immediately beneath the windows, and farther down the wall, a wider stone watertable encircles the building. The

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dominant feature of the exterior is the three-stage entrance tower at the southeast corner of the building. The first stage has a lancet-arched entrance on the east side and a pair of lancet-arched windows on the south side. The second stage has paired flat-headed windows on each exposed side, and the third stage features paired lancet arches with louvered-wood vents. Above the third stage, a corbeled cornice surrounds the tower, which is crowned by a steep pyramidal roof with a cross at the top.

The 1951 Education Building is a two-story structure that carries across the rear of the church and extends beyond the church wall one-bay to the north. It is six bays deep and six bays across the rear. The red brick of this addition is darker than that of the main church. It features a flat roof with stepped parapets on the sides, asymmetrically placed six-over-six sash windows, and chimneys on the north and south sides.

The 1980s' Fellowship and Office Building is also sided with red brick. The large T-shaped structure connects to the south side of the church, but is set well back from the church façade. The one-story building extends southward from the church and has a long rear wing to the west, where there is a raised basement. The building has a hipped roof and narrow rectangular windows with raised brickwork on either side. An open arcade at the north end of the east facade softens the building's connection to the south wall of the church. A narrow driveway leads from South Main Street to the rear parking area, and the hipped roof of the Fellowship and Office Building extends southward to form a porte-cochere over the drive. The entrance beneath the porte-cochere is recessed behind an arch. A secondary entrance with a small entrance porch is at the west end of this addition.

The interior of the sanctuary is a large, square room with a center aisle. It features narrow-board flooring, plastered walls with a vertical-board wainscot, and a ceiling that slopes upward on all four sides. The west end of the sanctuary has a series of large arches that open to the chancel and to the organ pipes. A large, pictorial, stained-glass, arched window is on each of the three other sides of the sanctuary along with smaller arched windows. (*History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd*)

**Carport**  
Ca. 1990

Noncontributing structure

Behind the church is a paved parking lot with a metal carport in the southwest corner. It has thin metal supports and a low arched roof (continuous with the side walls) with metal-board covering that continues halfway down the sides.

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### **Gaston Theater**

Noncontributing building

119 South Main Street  
Ca. 1925

Sanborn maps show that this building was erected between 1922 and 1929. The latter map labels it as “movies and vaudeville.” It was one of two theaters in town; the other was the Mount Holly Theater on East Charlotte Avenue. Photos from the 1950s show that the façade of the long, two-story, brick building was already stuccoed. There were three small windows in the upper façade, one of which marked the projection room. These have been enclosed, the marquee has been removed, and the front entrance has been replaced with two replacement doors. Still, the façade roofline’s stepped parapet remains intact, and the façade retains the recess of the original entrance and the flanking windows. After the removal, during the last quarter of the twentieth century, of the contiguous one-story building on the north side of the building to make way for the bank parking lot, the north elevation was stuccoed. However, the bricks remain exposed on the south side and rear of the building. There appears to be either an addition or replacement brickwork on the rear, to which a one-story, concrete block addition with a gable roof and a roll-up door has been appended. (SM; documentary photos; *Mount Holly News* “1950 in Review,” May 1970)

### **Commercial Building**

Contributing building

121 South Main Street  
Ca. 1925

This one-story brick building is typical of small commercial buildings erected in the 1920s. The storefront retains a recessed entrance but otherwise has been remodeled and stuccoed. However, the upper façade remains intact. It features two recessed brick panels, a soldier course halfway between the panels and the cornice, and a stepped-parapet cornice. The rear of the building has doors and paired windows on the basement and first-floor levels, with a metal stair and walkway servicing the upper level. At one time, this was the Howard and Rankin Department Store and later the Rankin Department Store (SM, documentary photos, Rhyne typescript)

### **Commercial Building**

Contributing building

122 South Main Street  
Ca. 1920

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A ca. 1920 documentary photo made by local photographer John Davenport (1870-1951) suggests that this one-story brick building was likely built around 1920. It was the battery service store attached to the south side of the Jenkins Motor Company (no longer standing). Locals recall that it housed a dry cleaning business before it became the current appliance store. The ca. 1920 photo shows that the façade is largely intact. The building has a central entrance flanked by shop windows, all with transoms. The current aluminum-framed double-leaf door and the windows have horizontal security bars. A slightly recessed brick name panel is positioned above the shop front. The remainder of the brick façade is plain, and there is a one-row brick cornice. Stepped parapets rise above the roofline on each side of the building. The north side is painted black. A concrete-block addition at the rear of the building (date unknown) has a pedestrian door and a metal roll-up door. (Documentary photograph, Beatty notes)

### **Shed**

Noncontributing building

Last quarter twentieth century

Behind the building is a storage shed. It has a concrete-block foundation and standing-seam metal side walls and roof, which is a shallow gable. A double-leaf door is at the gable end.

### **Summey Building**

Contributing building

123-127 South Main Street  
1927

Purvey B. Summey is believed to have built this two-story brick commercial block. The sides and rear of the building are red brick; yellow brick veneer covers the façade. The three-bay façade of the Commercial Style building is quite plain, except for the soldier-course bricks around the windows and the three brick name panels across the top which provide, in paint, the name of the building and its date of construction, 1927. The first story has three storefronts, all of which appear to have been remodeled during the third quarter of the twentieth century with replacement doors and windows. However, the brick posts on cast-stone bases that separate the storefronts remain intact. The five-bay second story features five pairs of one-over-one sash windows. Both sides of the building have a stepped parapet that hides the sloping roof. An alley runs along the south side of the building, which has no openings on the first story but five pairs of one-over-one sash windows and a door sheltered by a flat canopy on the second story. A long flight of metal stairs leads from the front of the building to the second-floor door. The rear of the building has a miscellaneous collection of replacement windows and doors, and a metal stair leads from the ground to the first-floor doors.

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Early occupants of the building included Paul Derr's Clothing Store in 123 and 125 and the Jones Brothers Meat Market in 127, before it moved across the street in the mid-1940s. Number 127 was later the Western Auto Store (SM, Rhyne typescript, documentary photograph).

### **Commercial Building**

Contributing building

124 South Main Street  
Ca. 1930; 1958

This building may have been constructed as early as 1930 and was the Mount Holly Farm Supply Store. However, the present appearance of the building dates from a 1958 modernization. At one time it was the Duke Power Company office.

The façade of the one-story brick building is veneered with red Roman brick. The plate-glass storefront recedes at an angle from south to north, ending with an aluminum-framed glass door. Just north of the door, a low brick wall and brick support post project out to the plane of the facade of the adjacent building. A blue, rounded, modern canvas canopy has been added. A brick addition extends the rear of the building and has a central door with metal canopy and an enclosed window south of it. (TR, Rhyne typescript, documentary photograph)

### **United States Post Office**

Contributing building

126 South Main Street  
Ca. 1958

This building was erected ca. 1958. Originally the post office, it was later used for storage by Jones Brothers Grocery and now by City Cafe.

The one-story, flat-roofed, brick structure has a modern façade created by the use of Roman bricks and an off-center aluminum-framed plate-glass opening that includes the entrance at the south end and large adjacent windows. The south side of the building is painted common-bond brick. The rear of the building is also laid in common-bond brick. It features a large, central loading door covered by a large wood canopy and an adjacent multi-pane window. (Documentary photograph, Rhyne typescript, Beatty notes)

### **Jones Brothers Grocery**

Contributing building

128 South Main Street  
Ca. 1947; ca. 1955

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When Jones Brothers Grocery closed in 2005, it had occupied this building for more than half a century. The south half was built ca. 1947, and the north half was added ca. 1955. The grocery had been established in 1938, and before moving to this location, it was located across the street in the Summey Building.

The building is set back from the street, because originally there was parking in front. The asphalt space between the building and sidewalk is demarcated by a low lattice fence and is used for an outdoor dining area.

Although the two parts of the one-story brick building work together visually as a single unit, there are slight differences. Common façade features include six-to-one common bond brickwork, aluminum-framed plate-glass windows, a Roman brick dado beneath the windows, a continuous flat metal canopy suspended by cables from the upper façade, and a stepped parapet roof. Nevertheless, there are differences. The earlier, south half is wider than the north half and has a central, double-leaf door with a transom and two large fixed panes of glass on either side. The north half has no door, but four, continuous, large panes of glass. The bricks of the north section are slightly darker than those on the south section. Stretcher bricks within a rectangular border of rowlock bricks creates a panel in the upper façade of the south half, while the north half simply has the pattern created by its six-to-one common bond.

Both halves of the building have a bowed roof, although the north roof is taller than the south. Stepped parapets on the sides of the building hide the bowed roofs. The south half of the building has a central, double-leaf wood entrance on the rear that provides access from the paving parking area behind the building. The door has a round canopy and is flanked by lantern sconces. The rear wall, itself, is stuccoed, and a low brick wall outlines an area of plantings. A brick wall projects from the rear between the two sections of the building, perhaps to give the entrance area on the south side a more finished look. The rear of the north side is strictly utilitarian and has a central door. It is shielded by a tall privacy fence.

Both the north and south sides of the interior have exposed wood ceilings supported by metal bowstring trusses. A load-bearing wall separates the two sides. Near the rear of the south side of the building is a heavy, insulated, wood-paneled door with heavy strap hinges and latch handle that opens to what originally was a refrigerated room. At the front end of the north wall of the north side of the building is a wide, metal-covered, gravity-operating sliding door that opens to the interior of the building at 126 South Main Street, now used as storage by the current occupant of 128, City Café. (TR, documentary photos, Beatty notes)



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### City Hall and Fire Department

129 South Main Street

Ca. 1925; 1970s

Noncontributing building

Originally, this was a two-story building that served as Mount Holly's City Hall and Fire Department. The Fire Department was officially established on April 25, 1927, with seven charter volunteer members. However, the 1922 Sanborn map labels the building as the City Hall and Fire Department (from plans). Thus, it is likely that the building was constructed prior to 1927 and perhaps initially housed only the City Hall until the Fire Department was established. The building also housed the Police Department, Jail and, on the second floor, a courtroom. Documentary photographs show that the building had a three-bay façade. On the first story, a double window was in the north bay, a round-arched pedestrian entrance was in the center bay, and a four-part folding door for the fire truck was in the south bay. Each panel of the folding door had an eight-light window in the upper third and a wood panel in the lower two thirds. Ironically, the front portion of the building that housed the fire department burned in the 1970s.

Where the front half of the building once stood is now a landscaped plaza with a low wall on the north and west sides bordered by bushes and flowers. Grass fills the north half of the plaza, and squares of concrete fill the south half and border the front of the building. A water fountain set in a stone base stands near the front of the concrete squares.

At the rear of the plaza, what remains of the building is only one story at the street level. It was finished off in the 1970s in a modernist manner, with the primary façade extending across the south three fourths of the overall building and the north one fourth a blank brick wall set back approximately three feet from the rest of the façade. The façade bricks are laid in six-to-one common bond, and a soldier-brick string course runs across the projecting façade about two thirds of the way up the wall. The north half of the projecting portion of the façade contains a glass door at the center with glass-paneled windows adjacent to it on the north. All are framed in anodized metal. A canvas canopy extends across the door and windows.

A narrow sloping alley separates the building from the Summey Building to its north. It exposes the former jail beneath the plaza just west of the present façade. The jail retains its iron-barred door and window. Because the ground slopes downward from the street, the surviving rear section of the building is two stories in height. It has a stepped parapet along the north side. The ground floor of the north side of the building has three small, boarded-up windows. The north side of the upper floor has three one-over-one sash windows. The rear of the building has a

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modern wood door with a canvas canopy at the center of the ground floor, flanked by two small windows, one of which has been bricked-up. The upper floor has three windows, the two at either end having one-over-one sash. The smaller center window is slightly lower than the other two and originally may have been a door. The bottom half is bricked-up, and the overall dimensions appear to be the same as the door beneath it. (SM, documentary photographs, Beatty notes)

**Commercial Building**  
131 South Main Street  
Ca. 1925

Contributing building

Sanborn maps indicate that this building was erected between 1922 and 1929. Local tradition claims that merchant Louis Kaplan had his department store on the first floor, while he and his family used the second floor as their residence. Later, the building became the offices of American and Efird Mills, Inc., created through the merger of American Yarn and Processing Company and Efird Manufacturing Company in 1952. In 1967, American and Efird conveyed the building to the City of Mount Holly, and it served as Mount Holly's Municipal Building until June 2008, when the city moved its offices to its present location in the former Albion Mill (later American and Efird Mills) on East Central Avenue.

The two-story, Commercial Style building has six-to-one common bond brick walls and a three-bay facade. Judging from documentary photographs, the original storefront had large shop windows, a deeply recessed entrance, and a prism-glass transom with small, tilted ventilation windows. Then, as now, a soldier-course with cast-stone corner blocks bordered the storefront, and the outer edge of the first story also had a vertical column of soldier-course bricks with a cast-stone block at the top. The entrance to the stair to the second story remains at the south end of the first story. It has the same type of border as seen elsewhere on the storefront. What has changed is the mid section of the first-story facade. When the building became an office in 1952, paired one-over-one sash windows surrounded by brick veneer replaced the larger shop windows, and a classical cornice was added above the first story. While the entrance remains recessed, it has been modernized. A concrete and brick handicap ramp with a metal handrail rises from the south end of the facade to the center entrance.

The second story of the facade remains intact. It has three sets of paired one-over-one sash windows with soldier course brick borders and cast-stone corner blocks. Above the windows, a brick-bordered name panel stretches across the facade. Topping the building is a parapeted cornice with a peaked center section.

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Stepped parapets follow the roof as it moves downward from the front to the rear of the building. The south side has plain brick walls punctured by one-over-one sash windows, mostly paired, but with a row of four on the second story. Halfway to the rear, the building drops in height. From the south side, it would appear to be a drop from two stories to one, but from the rear, the building still has two stories because of the slope of the land away from the street. On the north side of the building, the two-story section has a windowless brick wall that was probably rebuilt after the adjacent building burned in the 1970s. The rear of the north side has two glass-block windows on the ground floor with a small, higher window between the two. The upper floor of that side has two paired one-over-one sash windows. The ground floor of the rear of the building has a central door and a paired window to the south. An metal stair leads from the ground to a center entrance on the upper floor. It is flanked by two pairs of one-over-one sash windows.

An interior stair leads from the front of the building to the second floor, where the walls are plastered, the doors are five-paneled, and the floors are covered with linoleum tiles. A modernized council chamber and a wood-paneled mayor's office are on the first floor. A transverse hall near the front of the first floor opens to the adjacent building to the north, which had been a part of the municipal building. The ground floor has a built-in vault. (SM, documentary photographs, Beatty notes, Beatty E-mail, Gaston County survey file, American and Efird History)

### **First Presbyterian Church**

Contributing building

133 South Main Street  
1927

Church history states that Mount Holly's Presbyterian Church was an outgrowth of the Goshen Presbyterian Church, which had been established ca. 1764 by the Reverend Elihu Spencer of New York and the Reverend Alexander McWhorter of Philadelphia. They had come south for the purpose of organizing Presbyterian churches. Goshen was located about three miles south of Mount Holly. On January 4, 1891, the Goshen congregation voted to move to Mount Holly as soon as a building was provided. In the summer of 1890, the Reverend W. A. Phife had come to Mount Holly to hold revival services. Anxious to see a Presbyterian church built in the community, he purchased a lot on South Main Street and gave it to the Presbyterians for the purpose of erecting a church. In the early twentieth century, lots on the north and south sides of the lot given by Phife were added to the church property. In the winter of 1891-1892 services were held in Mount Holly, first in the union church and then in the Lutheran and Baptist churches. It was not until the summer of 1894 that a frame Presbyterian church was completed.

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In 1899, the name of the church was changed from Goshen to Mount Holly Presbyterian Church. When the name changed again, to First Presbyterian Church, is not known.

In 1927, the congregation built a large brick church to replace the frame church built in the 1890s. The opening service was held on May 13, 1928. Costing approximately \$42,000, the new church was a substantial upgrade from the small church it replaced. Measuring 40 x 170 feet, the church had an auditorium with a balcony; a basement with eight Sunday School rooms, a large recreation or dining room, and a kitchen; an assembly room for the Sunday School behind the auditorium; five additional Sunday School rooms; and a pastor's study. The windows in the auditorium were all memorials donated by different families. Ever mindful of the church's history, church officers in 1974 set aside a room behind the sanctuary to be the Historical Room. It still serves as such.

The exterior of the church appears not to have changed, except for replacing (or covering) the concrete front steps with brick steps. The interior was renovated in 2009-2010. The church is set back from the sidewalk by an expansive front lawn with a tree and other plantings. A metal picket fence runs across the front and down both sides of the property. The red brick walls of the one- and two-story Classical Revival Style, temple-front building exhibit a variation on seven-to-one common bond with decorative work executed in stretcher-and-soldier-brick borders, header-and-soldier-brick string courses, and header-brick panels. A broad flight of brick steps with metal hand rails rises to the monumental classical portico of the three-bay façade. Metal Ionic columns support a full classical entablature with a pedimented, dentiled cornice. The portico columns frame the large, classical, central entrance – with its cast stone surround and triangular pediment supported by console brackets – and the flanking main floor and balcony windows. Rectangular, one-over-one sash, sanctuary windows with transoms are filled with geometric stained glass, and lintels are cast stone. Basement windows are clear-glass six-over-six sash. A classical cornice runs along the sides of building. Crowning the asphalt-shingled front-gable roof is a four-sided cupola with a classical base and cornice, Ionic engaged columns flanking a louvered ventilator on each side, and a convex curved pyramidal roof with a ball finial. A two-story Sunday School wing with a flat roof and mostly paired six-over-six sash windows extends from the rear of the church. It is four bays deep and five bays wide. A chimney rises from the rear of the building, and a small, one-story, service ell extends from the rear.

Inside, the center-aisle sanctuary has Doric pilasters along the walls between the windows, boxed beams across the ceiling, and enlarged pilasters framing the dais and choir loft at the front of the room. At the rear of the sanctuary, the balcony has a paneled dado topped by a balustrade.

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Colonial Revival chandeliers hang from the ceiling. Doors at either side of the front of the church lead to the rear portions of the building. (Holland; Springs; documentary photographs)

### **Education Building and Fellowship Hall** 1959

Contributing building

In November 1958, a contract was let for the construction of an Education Building and Fellowship Hall. The completed building was first used on August 10, 1959. It stands adjacent to the church on the south side and set back from the church's façade so as not to compete with it. The building is a relatively simple brick-veneered structure with an asphalt-shingled, front-gable roof, a boxed cornice with cornice returns, a five-bay façade with a central entrance recessed within a classical surround with pediment, and six-over-six sash windows. The facade is one-story, but because of the slope of the land, the rear is two stories. A covered, open walkway connects the two buildings.

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### SIGNIFICANCE

#### Summary

The Downtown Mount Holly Historic District encompasses the historic commercial center of this Piedmont North Carolina town. Facilitated by the dual presence of the Catawba River and, since 1860, the railroad, Mount Holly evolved from the late-nineteenth century as one of several Gaston County towns whose economy was based primarily on the textile industry. The numerous textile mills located in and around Mount Holly since 1874 generated a level of prosperity that supported a thriving commercial base. By far, most of the district's twenty-eight primary resources are commercial buildings, but there are also two historic churches. The locally significant historic district meets Criteria A and C for listing in the National Register because of its significance in the areas of commerce and architecture. The period of significance spans the years from the ca. 1883 construction of the district's oldest commercial building to 1960, when the last commercial building was erected and when the district was still a vibrant commercial center.

Mount Holly evolved from the late-eighteenth-century Woodlawn community in northeastern Gaston County. With the 1860 arrival of the Wilmington, Charlotte, and Rutherford Railroad, Woodlawn was poised to grow. However, the Civil War stopped any ambitious plans, and it was not until the 1870s that attention could return to taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by the Catawba River and its tributaries and the railroad. In 1874, brothers A. P. and Daniel E. Rhyne founded the Mount Holly Cotton Mill, the first of many textile mills to be established in the community. In 1879, A. P. Rhyne and others successfully petitioned the state legislature to incorporate the community around the mill as the new town of Mount Holly.

As industrial development continued in Mount Holly, the town's commercial center grew. The earliest stores were frame, but by the 1880s substantial brick buildings were being erected. Several of the district's commercial buildings date from the first decade of the twentieth century, but the heaviest period of growth was in the prosperous 1920s. Nearly half of the district's one and two-story buildings were constructed then; others followed in the post-World War II years from ca. 1948 to 1960.

For the most part, the commercial buildings in the Downtown Mount Holly Historic District are stylistically conservative and are typical of those built in small towns across North Carolina from the late nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. All are brick. The earliest buildings feature segmental-arched windows and simple corbelled or parapeted cornices. Those erected in the 1920s typically reflect the Commercial Style with patterned brickwork and cast-stone accents, although the 1920 Mount Holly Bank strongly reflects the influence of the

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Classical Revival style. After World War II, the district's commercial buildings began to emulate modernist design, with a more horizontal emphasis and an increased use of glass.

In addition to the district's commercial buildings, the 100-block of South Main Street was, historically, the location of Mount Holly's early churches. The two that remain, the 1903 Gothic Revival-style Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd and the Classical Revival-style First Presbyterian Church built in 1927, are among the most architecturally distinctive buildings in the district.

Today, the Downtown Mount Holly Historic District survives as the most intact and cohesive collection of historic commercial buildings and churches in the community. It contains the oldest, largest, and most significant commercial buildings in the center of Mount Holly, and its two churches represent the best historic ecclesiastical architecture in town.

### Historical Background and Commerce and Architecture Contexts

The community that eventually became Mount Holly began near the Tuckasee Ford of the Catawba River in the second half of the eighteenth century. Around 1765, early settler Robert Alexander acquired a farm there that he called Woodlawn. Soon, the community itself came to be known as Woodlawn, a name that it retained for the next century. Though small, the community that grew up at Woodlawn must have been large enough to warrant its own post office by the turn of the nineteenth century, for the Reverend Humphrey Hunter was appointed postmaster in 1801. He was minister of Goshen Presbyterian Church, which had been established ca. 1764 as one of the first churches west of the Catawba River. Goshen was the mother church from which the Mount Holly Presbyterian Church (now First Presbyterian Church) was established more than a century later. Because the post office was located in Hunter's home, it was called the Huntersville post office until 1836, when the name was changed to Woodlawn (Brenkle, 213; Beatty, et al., draft introduction; *Gastonia Gazette*, June 27, 1957).

The community's earliest commercial venture began in the early 1840s, when entrepreneurs Frederick Hoffman and Moses Rhyne operated a store at Woodlawn. On June 4, 1842, leaders from the southern section of Lincoln County, of which Woodlawn was then a part, met at the Hoffman-Rhyne Store, also known as the Woodlawn Store, to discuss the formation of a new county. Success came in 1846, when Gaston County was created (Brenkle, 213; Beatty, et al., draft introduction).

In 1860, an event of great import to the future of the Mount Holly area took place when the Wilmington, Charlotte and Rutherford Railroad – the first rail line to enter Gaston County – crossed the Catawba River just south of Dutchman's Creek (which flows through present-day Mount Holly just northeast of the historic district). The presence of the railroad was essential to the development of both commerce and industry. Soon, new development in the Woodlawn



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community moved a half-mile north to be closer to the railroad. In 1873, the Wilmington, Charlotte, and Rutherford Railroad reorganized as the Carolina Central Railroad, which became part of the Seaboard Air Line Railway in 1892. After several more transitions, the railroad became part of CSX Transportation, Inc. in 1986 (Brengele, 213; Beatty et al., draft introduction; North Carolina Railroads).

Just as Woodlawn was poised for great progress, the Civil War commenced, which brought continued development in the community to a halt. It was not until the 1870s that Woodlawn, like the rest of the county and region, was able to move forward once again. When it did, it was the textile industry that drove the burgeoning local economy.

The first successful cotton factory in North Carolina was established ca. 1814 by Michael Schenck in neighboring Lincoln County. By 1840, twenty-five cotton mills operated in the state, mostly in the Piedmont. Gaston County's first cotton mill was established in 1848 on the Catawba River near the future site of Mount Holly. However, while the region had ample resources of climate, water power, raw materials, and cheap labor, the initial development of textile manufacturing was hindered by a scarcity of capital and transportation. It did not become a major economic force in Lincoln and Gaston counties until well after the Civil War. The 1880s brought rapid industrialization in North Carolina, and Gaston County emerged as a major textile center (Phillips, Laboratory Historic District, 19-20; Shrimpton, Downtown Gastonia Historic District, 8.4-5).

In 1874, brothers Abel Peterson and Daniel Efird Rhyne, sons of Woodlawn merchant Moses Rhyne, and Ambrose Costner, A. P. Rhyne's father-in-law, founded the Mount Holly Cotton Mill. Construction of the mill, which was located on Dutchman's Creek, a tributary of the Catawba River, began in 1875 and was completed the following year. The mill was the fourth to be built in Gaston County and signaled the beginning of what was to become the economic lifeblood of the community – the textile industry. The mill's success brought more people to the area, and in January 1879, A. P. Rhyne and others petitioned the state legislature to incorporate the Woodlawn community around the mill as the new town of Mount Holly, taking its name from the mill. The date of incorporation was March 14, 1879 (Ragan, 25-26; Beatty et al., draft introduction).

The increased activity generated by the Mount Holly Cotton Mill spurred commercial development in the new town. Documentary photographs of Main Street suggest that the first stores were frame structures, but by the 1880s, substantial brick buildings were also being constructed on Main Street. The building at 107-119 North Main Street, known during its early years as the Farrar Building or simply as the brick block, was built ca. 1883. Believed to be the oldest commercial building in Mount Holly, the two-story structure with a seventeen-bay façade is also the largest in the historic district. Originally, its second-floor windows had brick segmental-arched heads typical of the period (now covered by modern window cornices), and its

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parapeted cornice rose at the center to form the shape of a round arch, a signature feature once found on many of Mount Holly's early commercial buildings. A variety of stores and a funeral home on the second floor occupied the building. Around 1886, a second two-story brick commercial building was erected, this one at 106 South Main Street. With its three-bay façade, it was not nearly as large as the building at 107-119 North Main Street. Its façade features – including plain brick pilasters, second-story sash windows with segmental-arched brick heads, upper façade brick name panels, and a corbelled brick cornice – are all typical of commercial buildings constructed in small towns throughout North Carolina during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Initially, the building was the general store of C. L. Hutchinson and Son. Later it was the Hutchison-Davenport Store, the Leader Department Store, and the Quality Store (Branson, 1890; Ragan, 272-273; documentary photographs; *Mount Holly News*, January 5, 1978; Beatty notes; Rhyne typescript).

The 1890 U. S. Census reported Mount Holly's population as 472. Although this was less than half the size of Gastonia, the county seat, Mount Holly nevertheless was the second largest town in the county. By 1890, two more textile mills – the Tuckaseegee Manufacturing Company (1883) and the Albion or Mount Holly Knitting Company (1888) – had been built, and in 1891 they were joined by the Nims Manufacturing Company, established by C. Egbert Hutchison and a group of other local investors. In fact, by this time, Mount Holly was becoming a rather busy place, judging from the listings in Branson's 1890 *North Carolina Business Directory*. In addition to the textile mills, there were two grist and saw mills, a distillery, a gold mine, a blacksmith shop, two stores, a hotel, an academy, two churches, and two physicians. Probably most telling, however, was the presence of three contracting and building firms – surely an indication that there was much construction going on in town (Cope and Wellman, 191-130; Ragan, vii and 272; Branson, 1890).

One reflection of Mount Holly's status as a stable and growing community lies in the establishment of several religious congregations during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. In the early years, people of various denominations met in a store building for interdenominational services whenever a circuit preacher was in town. In 1881, these people decided to build an actual church building. They determined that whichever denomination raised the most money for the church's construction would own and control the building, although it was agreed that the other denominations could hold services in the building until they could erect their own churches. With a heavy concentration of Lutherans in the area, including Mount Holly Mill owners A. P. Rhyne and Ambrose Costner, and with a lot donated by Rhyne for the purpose of building a church, the Lutherans pledged the most money, \$460, and the resulting frame building became the Mount Holly Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Baptists and Methodists both organized in 1890 and built their own churches; the Presbyterians followed in 1894 (although they had established a congregation in 1891 with the help of members of Goshen

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Presbyterian Church). All four churches were frame structures and all were located in the 100 block of South Main Street. All were later replaced by substantial brick edifices, the first being the Lutheran church in 1903. The Lutherans built a sophisticated Gothic Revival-style building with numerous hallmarks of the style, including lancet-arched doors and windows with brick hood molds, steep rooflines, buttresses, and a three-stage corner tower. Influenced by the ecclesiastical architecture of medieval Europe, the Gothic Revival style became largely synonymous with the physical concept of “church.” Today, the Lutheran church is the oldest church building in Mount Holly. When the church was consecrated in 1907, its name was changed to Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. Of the four churches originally located in the 100 block of South Main Street, only the 1903 Lutheran and 1927 Presbyterian churches remain. The Baptists built their present large brick church at 300 South Main Street in 1924, and the Methodists built theirs at 140 North Main Street in 1960 (*History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd*, 2-3, 29-31; Springs, 1-2; Beatty et al.).

After the two brick commercial buildings on Main Street were erected in the 1880s, construction appears to have slowed. Based on the surviving buildings, none are known to have been built in the 1890s and only four buildings – including the Lutheran church – date from the first decade of the twentieth century. The ca. 1900 building at 105 North Main Street, just north of the railroad, housed the office of owner A. P. Rhyne on the first floor, and the second floor, known as Rhyne Hall, had a stage and was the scene of a wide variety of community events. However, when West Charlotte Avenue (NC 27) was widened in the 1930s, the building’s size was greatly diminished. (Rhyne typescript; Beatty notes; documentary photographs).

A 1907 documentary photo of Main Street shows no additional brick buildings, but it does show something of great significance to Mount Holly’s commercial center – power poles and power lines. In 1905, brothers J. B. and B. N. Duke had incorporated the Southern Power Company (which later became Duke Power Company) with principal offices in Charlotte. Soon, they began producing electricity for ever-expanding areas in the Carolinas. Initially, they were particularly concerned with providing power to industry, including the many textile mills that were being built along the Catawba River. Both the generation and transmission components of Southern Power Company steadily grew. In 1913, a steam station began operation in Mount Holly, and in 1928-29 the company built the first two units of the Riverbend Steam Station on the Catawba River near Mount Holly. This benefit encouraged not only industrial development, but also commerce in the towns, like Mount Holly, that it affected (Documentary photograph; Durden, 18-20, 33, 102).

In 1906, C. E. Hutchison added another textile mill – the Woodlawn Manufacturing Company – to the group of mills located at Mount Holly. By the end of the twentieth century’s first decade, two more buildings had been erected in the Downtown Mount Holly Historic District at 104 and 108 South Main Street. While they are not particularly stylish, the simple,

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conservative features of these one-story brick buildings are typical of many commercial buildings constructed between 1900 and 1930. Each has a three-bay storefront with either a recessed central entrance or one that is flush with the shop windows on either. At 108 South Main Street, the upper façade is totally plain and is capped by a plain brick cornice. The building at 104 South Main Street has a reserved classical metal cornice above the shop front, and a recessed brick name panel nearly spans the width of the upper façade. Above the name panel, the building is crowned with a stepped parapet (the central step has been removed) with a granite coping (Ragan, 272).

No buildings are known to have been constructed within the district during the 1910s. However, three more textile mills were added to Mount Holly's collection: the Adrian Manufacturing Company in 1916, American Processing Company in 1918, and Globe Yarn Mills, Inc. in 1919. It is likely that Mount Holly's Kendrick Brick and Tile Company provided the bricks for these mills and for other brick buildings erected in the town from 1916, when the first of eventually eight round beehive kilns were fired up, to 1962, when the plant closed (Ragan, viii-ix, 272; *Gastonia Gazette*, April 21, 1963).

The textile industry continued to drive Mount Holly's economy in the 1920s. In 1920, C. E. Hutchison became the first Gaston County mill owner to consolidate all of his independent holdings into a single controlling corporation – the American Yarn and Processing Company – for which he served as president and treasurer. The company owned seven mills that employed 1,000 workers. Today the company operates as American and Efird, Inc., manufacturer of sewing threads and industrial yarns, with headquarters near downtown Mount Holly (Ragan, 272; Beatty, et al.).

Meanwhile, the 1920s brought a burst of new commercial construction in Mount Holly's downtown as in other North Carolina towns and cities, for the decade leading up to the Great Depression was a period of marked prosperity in most places. In Mount Holly's downtown, the 1920s proved to be the strongest period of growth. Sanborn maps for 1922 and 1929 show a great increase in the number of brick commercial buildings lining Main Street and Central Avenue. In fact, of the twenty-seven primary buildings in the Downtown Mount Holly Historic District, thirteen – forty-eight percent – were erected during the 1920s. The maps also show an increase in commercial construction outside the district, especially along East Charlotte Avenue and the east side of the 100 block of North Main Street, but most of these buildings either have been heavily remodeled or demolished since the mid-twentieth century. Among these was one of the largest of the downtown buildings, a two-story brick structure at the southeast corner of South Main Street and East Central Avenue that housed a bank, stores, and the Juliette Hotel. It was demolished in the 1980s for the modern bank building and parking lot that now occupy the site (Sanborn maps, 1922 and 1929; documentary photographs).

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A variety of buildings, both one and two stories, was built in the district during the 1920s. One of the first commercial buildings of the decade was also the most stylish. The Mount Holly Bank, established in 1903, erected a building at 100 South Main Street in 1920. Although only one story, the brick building's Classical Revival stylishness stands out in the district. The Classical, or Neoclassical, Revival was inspired by the temple architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. A bold, monumental style, its effect was achieved primarily through the use of classical design elements such as columns, pilasters, pediments, and cornices. The style was especially popular for the construction of banks built in the 1920s across North Carolina and elsewhere. Its monumentality and refined classicism expressed both prominence in the community and a sense of stability, reliability, security, and permanence – all traits intended to engender public confidence in the financial institution (Historic Commercial Architectural Styles, 18-19; Phillips, Thomasville Downtown Historic District, 56). The Mount Holly Bank boasts red brick pilasters with contrasting white capitals and cornices and, over its primary entrance, a classical cornice with support brackets and a shaped parapet.

Other one-story buildings, such as those at 119 and 121 West Central Avenue, were much simpler with plain facades except for brick name panels. The building at 119 West Central Avenue played an important role in Mount Holly life. It was the home of the *Mount Holly News* from its establishment ca. 1926 to ca. 1970 (Sanborn maps, 1922 and 1929; Interviews with Lark, Frady, and Nixon).

Several of the two-story buildings erected during the 1920s are noteworthy because they reflect what is known as the Commercial Style of the early twentieth century. Flat wall surfaces of patterned masonry, shaped parapets, and large rectangular windows arranged in groups characterize the style, which was a reaction to the more ornate styles of the late-nineteenth-century Victorian period (Historic Commercial Architectural Styles, 18). The buildings at 107 and 111 West Central Avenue and at 131 South Main Street all make decorative use of brick borders and string courses accented with cast-stone corner blocks. The building at 131 South Main Street began as a department store, then served as the offices of American and Efirid Mills, and finally as Mount Holly's Municipal Building until 2008. The building at 129 South Main Street was built for use as the City Hall and Fire Department. After a fire in the 1970s reduced the two-story building to a one-story structure set back from the street, it continued as an annex to the adjacent Municipal Building. Despite the drastic changes to the building resulting from the fire, it retains its basement-level jail visible from the alley on its north side.

Two more commercial buildings along the east side of South Main Street are of note. The Gaston Theater, one of the town's two early theaters, was built at 119 South Main Street for movies and vaudeville shows. The building retains the stepped parapet of its facade, but the small windows in the upper façade have been covered, and the marquee has been removed. By the 1950s, the façade of the two-story building had been stuccoed. The 1927 Summey Building

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at 123-127 South Main Street is quite plain, except for the brick name panels in the upper façade. However, it stands out in the district both because of its yellow brick-veneered façade and its three-storefront width.

The 1920s also saw the construction of the second of the two churches in the district. The large, brick, First Presbyterian Church was erected in 1927. Like the Lutheran church, it is one of the most architecturally impressive buildings in the district. Unlike the Lutheran church, which reflects the Gothic Revival style, the Presbyterian church exemplifies the Classical Revival style. In some respects, this style was an odd choice for the design of a Christian church – since it derived from the pagan temples of ancient Greece and Rome – but its stateliness and image of permanence made it a frequent choice for twentieth-century church design. At First Presbyterian Church, a monumental classical portico with Ionic columns and full classical entablature with pedimented cornice dominates the three-bay façade, while a classical cupola crowns the building.

In addition to the statement of Mount Holly's growth in the 1920s made by the commercial buildings erected during that decade, another picture of the town's growth is captured in the census figures for 1920 and 1930. In 1920, 1,160 residents were recorded in the town. By 1930, that number had nearly doubled to 2,254 (Cope and Wellman, 163, 177).

With the onslaught of the Great Depression, construction in the district nearly came to a halt. Only two one-story buildings – those at 124 South Main Street and 123 North Main Street – are believed to have been constructed in the 1930s. (The present appearance of the building at 124 South Main Street dates from a 1958 remodeling.) Nevertheless, a promotional brochure for Mount Holly from the 1930s gives the impression that the town's commerce and industry remained healthy. Perhaps an enumeration, in word and pictures, of Mount Holly's stores, financial institutions, cotton mills, automobile dealerships, and other business establishments was designed to have a positive psychological effect on the image of the town held by both residents and outsiders (1930s promotional brochure; Rhyne, "Mount Holly through the Years").

After the Depression, construction in the commercial district continued to lag through World War II, when building materials were scarce. However, during the post-war years of the late 1940s and, especially, the 1950s, construction activity resumed. Six commercial buildings and the Education Building/Fellowship Hall at First Presbyterian Church all date from these years (124 South Main Street was actually a ca. 1930 building that was completely remodeled in 1958), amounting to twenty-two percent of all district buildings. In addition, a large Education Building wing at the Lutheran church was erected in 1951. These construction projects took place throughout the district, and the appearance of the buildings shows this to have been a time of transition from the simple, traditional, commercial design common during much of the first half of the twentieth century to modernism.

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The Jones Brothers Grocery at 128 South Main Street, built ca. 1947 and ca. 1955 during two stages of construction, and the building at 117 West Central Avenue, erected ca. 1950, exemplify the traditional commercial design that continued to be erected in the mid-twentieth century. Both are simple, one-story brick buildings with a typical brick panel in the upper façade and a stepped parapet cornice.

However, when Dr. Raymond Moore built his dental office at 113 West Central Avenue around 1948, he chose a form for his one-story brick building that hinted in several of its features of the coming modernism of the mid-twentieth century. These features include a nearly flat hipped roof with widely overhanging eaves, an asymmetrical façade with a slightly projecting left half, a flat-roofed canopy that shelters the entrance and the front steps, and architectural brick planters that tie in with the façade.

Modernism, as expressed in many commercial buildings constructed throughout North Carolina during the mid-twentieth century, was a style that consciously emphasized stark simplicity, industrial technology, and horizontality. One-story, flat-roofed buildings with plate-glass and aluminum storefronts surmounted by enameled panels or plain brickwork and often with metal canopies became the norm (Historic Commercial Architectural Styles, 20).

Among the examples of modernism in the historic district are the adjacent buildings at 124 and 126 South Main Street, both of which were built or remodeled ca. 1958. They are simple, one-story brick structures with Roman brick-veneered fronts and aluminum-framed plate-glass doors and windows that nearly consume the facades. The windows of 124 South Main Street recede at an angle from south to north, ending at the door, another modern touch. The original or early uses of these buildings were important to Mount Holly. Number 124 was once the office of Duke Power Company; number 126 was originally the post office.

The best example of commercial modernism is the former Kimbrell's Store, located at 125 North Main Street at the north end of the historic district. Built in 1956 by Young Construction Company of Charlotte, it exhibits a streamlined horizontality. While the sides and rear of the one-story building are plain brick veneer, the long façade is composed of a wall of plate-glass windows and an off-center door set in aluminum frames on a low brick base. A flat-roofed canopy with a red-painted edge runs the length of the façade and is supported by red-painted metal poles. Above the canopy, a row of green metal panels completes the façade.

The last building constructed in the district, and another example of modernism, was Charlie's Drugs and Sundries, erected in 1960 at 125 West Central Avenue, the west end of the district. Similar to the buildings at 124 and 126 South Main Street, the one-story structure features a façade of Roman brick framing large plate-glass windows and a central door. More than fifty years later, Charlie's Drugs still occupies the building.

An aerial photograph from ca. 1960 shows that since that time there have been few changes within the boundary of the historic district. In the 1970s, the front portion of the two-

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story building at 129 South Main Street that originally housed the City Hall, Fire Department, Police Department, and jail burned. The section that had burned was removed and replaced with a small plaza and the back section is set back from the street with a new one-story façade. The rehabilitated building continued to serve in conjunction with the adjacent Municipal Building until it moved to its present location outside the district in 2008. When the Lutherans at 110 South Main Street prepared to build their large Fellowship and Office Building in the 1980s, they purchased the Jenkins Motor Company building, which stood adjacent to the church on the south, and razed it to provide the space needed for the addition and a driveway. The addition to the church, designed by Stewart and Cooper Architects, constitutes the only new construction in the district since 1960 (*History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd*, 69).

Rehabilitation projects in 2010 have returned several North Main Street buildings to a closer approximation of their original appearance. The façade of the two-story building at 107-119 North Main Street had been covered with metal during the third quarter of the twentieth century. This was removed, exposing the original brickwork and second-story windows and opening up the storefronts. The facades of the two adjacent one-story buildings at 121 and 123 North Main Street were completely remodeled, probably in the 1970s, with largely enclosed storefronts and a sloped, wood-shake “roof” that had been extended across the upper facades, making the two buildings appear to be one. This was removed, exposing the original brickwork of the upper facades, and the storefronts were opened up and recreated in a manner typical of small commercial buildings erected during the 1920s and 1930s.

The ca. 1960 aerial photograph also points out significant changes – both remodelings and demolitions – that have taken place since that time to the commercial buildings located outside the district on the east side of Main Street north of 119 South Main Street and along East Charlotte and East Central avenues. Several well-preserved commercial buildings from the first half of the twentieth century do remain in this area, but at this point, these few are no longer physically closely connected to the historic district. Thus, the area included in the Downtown Mount Holly Historic District constitutes the most cohesive collection of historic commercial buildings in the center of this piedmont North Carolina town.



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### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Downtown Mount Holly Historic District is shown by the heavy black line on the accompanying district map, drawn to a scale of 1" = approx. 80'.

#### Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Downtown Mount Holly Historic District is drawn to encompass the cohesive collection of intact historic resources that historically and visually reflect the core of Mount Holly's commercial center between ca. 1888 and 1960. The boundary excludes the residential area to the north, the altered or later commercial buildings to the east, the later commercial and residential buildings to the south, and the vacant lots and later commercial and residential buildings to the west.

### PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information for #1-5 applies to all nomination photographs, except where noted:

- 1) Downtown Mount Holly Historic District
- 2) Mount Holly, Gaston County, North Carolina
- 3) Laura A. W. Phillips
- 4) Photo #4 was photographed October 2010; all others were photographed January 2011
- 5) CD: NCHPO, Raleigh, North Carolina
- 6-7)
  - 1: Streetscape, 100-108 South Main Street, view to southwest
  - 2: Streetscape, 110-100 South Main Street, view to northwest
  - 3: Streetscape, 122-128 South Main Street, view to southwest
  - 4: First Presbyterian Church, 133 South Main Street, view to northeast
  - 5: Streetscape, 131-119 South Main Street, view to northeast
  - 6: Streetscape, 105-125 North Main Street, view to northwest
  - 7: Railroad track and 100 block West Central Avenue, view to southwest
  - 8: Streetscape, 125 – 107 West Central Avenue, view to southeast
  - 9: Kimbrell's Store, 125 North Main Street, view to southwest